



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 10, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader McCarthy:

Thank you for your strong leadership in delivering the most recent bipartisan coronavirus response bill to provide urgently needed funds in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Specifically, we were pleased to see \$638 million included for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to create a program that would provide relief for households struggling to pay their water and sewer bills during the pandemic, the first time the federal government has developed such a program. As Congress considers further legislative actions as the pandemic persists, Congress must work together to provide additional targeted and robust relief for Americans, including those facing high water bills, that may impact the virus' ability to spread.

As a part of its recommendations to prevent the spread of coronavirus, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recommending Americans regularly wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Indeed, this guidance from health experts is a proven way to reduce exposure and prevent the spread of all diseases, including the coronavirus. However, in many communities across the country, access to clean and affordable water continues to be a challenge.

Access to clean drinking water is a basic human right. Some of the poorest communities in America pay the highest water rates in the country. Many communities facing larger systemic issues like job loss, population loss and failing infrastructure have resorted to increasing water rates, shifting the burden to local ratepayers. In a survey of the 500 largest water systems in the country, it was found that on average Flint, Mich. residents paid about \$864 a year for water service, nearly double the national average. But Flint is not alone. In other communities nationwide, high water rates have especially hurt lower-income households, who pay a disproportionate amount of their income for water service.

According to estimates from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies and American Water Works Association, there are an estimated \$9.22 billion in overdue bills from both drinking water and wastewater services as households faced economic hardship and as shutoff moratoriums were enacted in many states and communities. These unpaid balances have swelled and are largely owed to local governments, which are on the frontline of fighting for the coronavirus and taking care of our families. If money is not coming into these local governments, they must face the tough decision on where else to cut services.

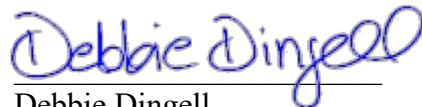
Thus, as Congress considers additional legislative actions to address the coronavirus, we must work together, in a bipartisan fashion, to provide robust relief for communities with high water bills. But it is unconscionable that during an infectious disease outbreak, local governments must choose between providing health care services and educating our children in order to ensure people are able to have safe and reliable drinking water and wastewater service. Surely in the richest country in the world, we can ensure that every American has access to safe and affordable water.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Daniel T. Kildee
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Debbie Dingell
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Lisa Blunt Rochester
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Bennie G. Thompson
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Paul Tonko
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Tony Cárdenas
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Eleanor Holmes Norton
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Gwen Moore
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Bobby L. Rush
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Steve Cohen
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Nanette Diaz Barragán
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Sheila Jackson Lee
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Jerry McNerney
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Elissa Slotkin
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
A. Donald McEachin
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Alcee L. Hastings
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Brenda L. Lawrence
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Ro Khanna
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
James P. McGovern
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Terri A. Sewell
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Kathleen M. Rice
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Bonnie Watson Coleman
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Pramila Jayapal
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Deborah K. Ross
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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Tom O'Halleran
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Julia Brownley
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
André Carson
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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Jerrold Nadler
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Tim Ryan
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_____/s/_____
Chellie Pingree
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_____/s/_____
Adriano Espaillat
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David N. Cicilline
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_____/s/_____
Mark Pocan
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John B. Larson
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_____/s/_____
Raúl M. Grijalva
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Andy Levin
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_____/s/_____
Dwight Evans
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_____/s/_____
Jesús G. “Chuy” García
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Mike Doyle
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Earl Blumenauer
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_____/s/_____
Mondaire Jones
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_____/s/_____
Albio Sires
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Jan Schakowsky
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Diana DeGette
MEMBER OF CONGRESS